



Public Health
England



Public Health England and Association of Directors of Public Health survey findings: Tackling obesity

15 January 2014



Introduction

Kevin Fenton, PHE National Director for Health and Wellbeing:

'I am grateful to all of you for making time to provide us with your views and insights. Your views on our role at a centre and national level confirm to me the importance of us all working together to tackle obesity.'

Your responses highlight key challenges and as we all work within one public health system we must share these. I believe we can work through these and to do so it is important that we all make best use of knowledge, expertise and networks wherever we work. Doing so together we can achieve better health outcomes.

I will make sure we fully use your views on developing our approaches on obesity and I look forward to sharing this with you in 2014.'



Introduction

Nicola Close, CEO Association for Directors of Public Health:

‘For me one of the messages that comes out loudly is that the work of PHE should be complementary to that of local PH teams.

PHE offers best support where they can provide added value in terms of evidence and information and national and regional approaches.

It seems an obvious point but where we are all learning how to work together it is good to have it brought out so clearly.’



Rationale for the survey

- working to prevent and tackle obesity is a shared priority for Public Health England and Department of Health
- one of PHE's key roles is to provide support and advice to help local authorities tackle poor diets and obesity within their local communities
- to inform PHE's approaches to this issue it is important that we listen to and explore the views of the breadth of stakeholders, particularly at a local level
- Directors of Public Health (DsPH) represent a valued and strategic public health leader at a local level and therefore it was a priority for PHE to gain DsPH insights into current key issues to inform our approach to tackling obesity.



Aim of the survey

The survey had two main aims –

- to explore DsPH views on the current strategic issues relating to obesity and how obesity was positioned within local priorities
- to explore DsPH views on priority areas for PHE action and to ascertain priority for the centres and national teams

This survey was a collaborative effort with the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) with support from the Local Government Association (LGA) – this partnership and support was particularly important, especially at such a busy time of transformation.



Methodology & response

- online survey administered by ADPH
- combination of closed and three open questions to explore views of DsPH towards key stakeholders, challenges and role of PHE
- survey ran from 6 to 30 September
- ADPH sent out a reminder on 12 September and on 18/19 September PHE, through its centre directors contacted DsPH to invite their further participation
- 103 DsPH responded to the survey, which was sent out to 136 ADPH members – a response rate of 76% (response rate to individual questions did vary)



Survey questions

1. Please indicate, which of the following best describes your authority
2. Please indicate which LA region your authority is in
3. Are the topics below (child, adult obesity, lifestyle messages and weight management) priorities in your JSNAs/H&WBS? If so, have you set specific targets?
4. Who, in your local authority/area do you consider as PRIORITY partners in driving forward action on tackling obesity? (Please tick as many as are relevant)
5. What key challenges and threats do you face now and in the future when tackling obesity in your LA? (Please tick as many as are relevant)
- 6 & 7. Series of statements on centre and national led action, which DsPH were asked to assess in terms of priority
8. Please provide any further views and comments on the issue of tackling obesity in your local area and on PHEs supporting role



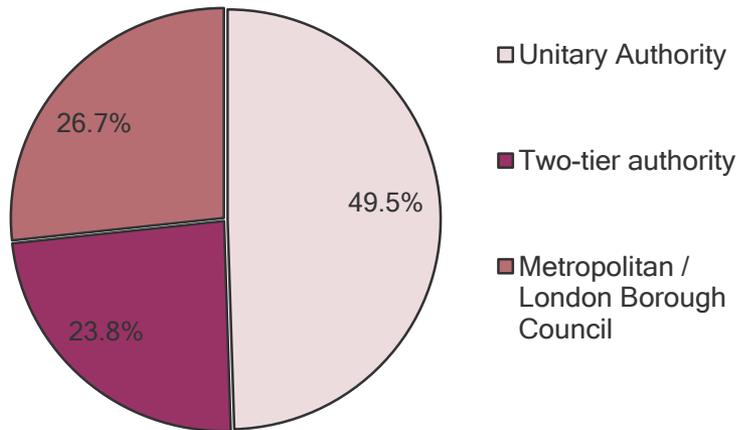
Summary of findings

- tackling obesity remains a high priority
- local authority Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA)/Health and Wellbeing strategies (H&WBS) feature child and adult obesity as a priority
- a range of local stakeholders have roles to play with Clinical Commissioning Groups reported as the top priority
- competing priorities for financial resources is the key threat now and in the future
- advising on whole system approach to obesity & healthy weight is key at PHE centre level
- leading the national debate on a system-wide approach to obesity is key at PHE national level

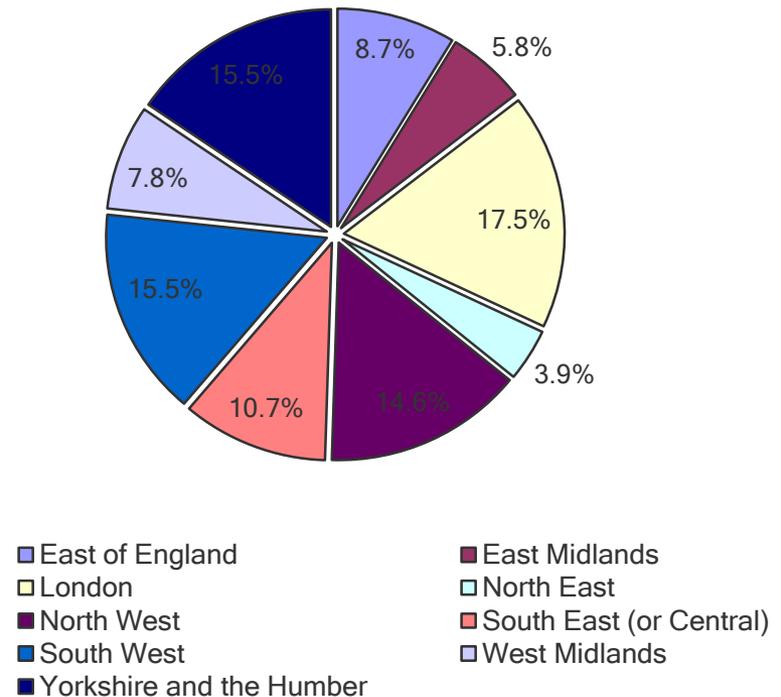


Representation

Description of authority



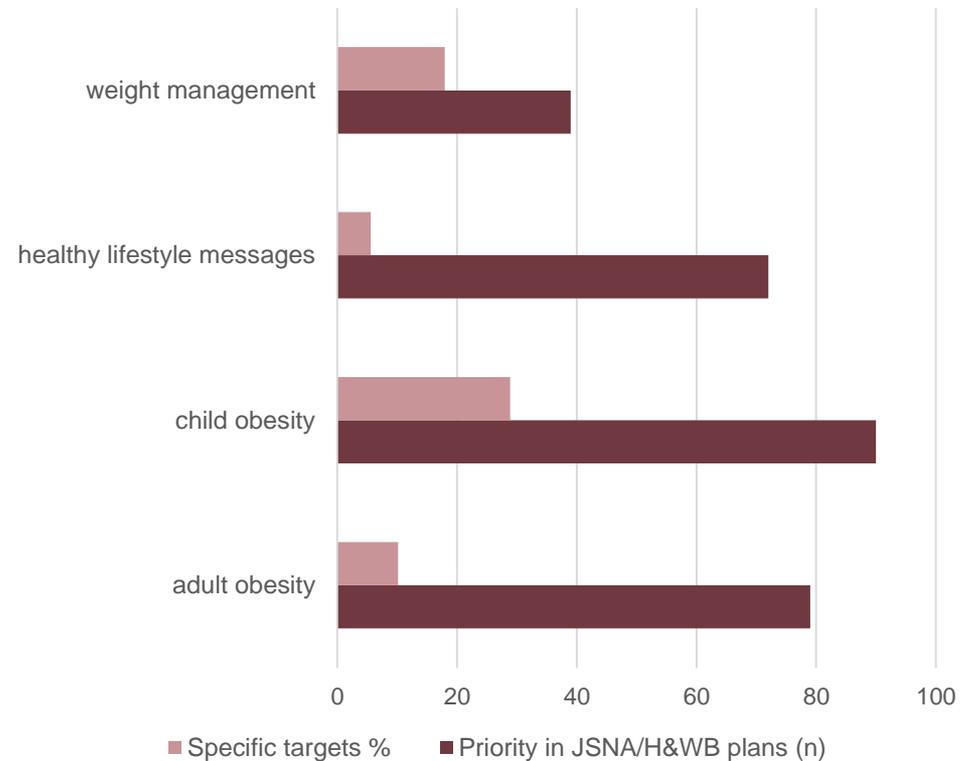
Response profile by region
(n=103)





Prioritising obesity in JSNA

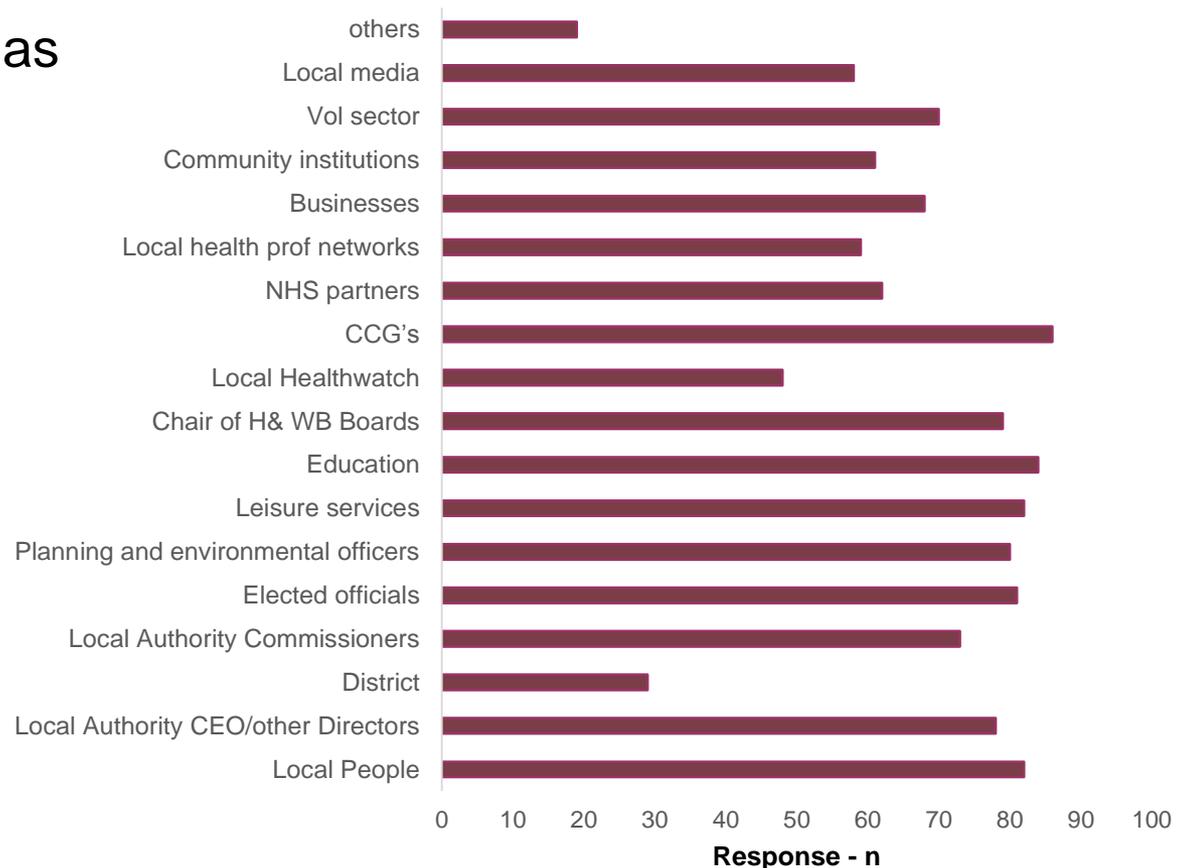
- tackling child and adult obesity is a priority
- 97% responded that child obesity in JSNA/H&WB strategy
- provision of healthy lifestyle messages features significantly
- weight management features to a lesser extent





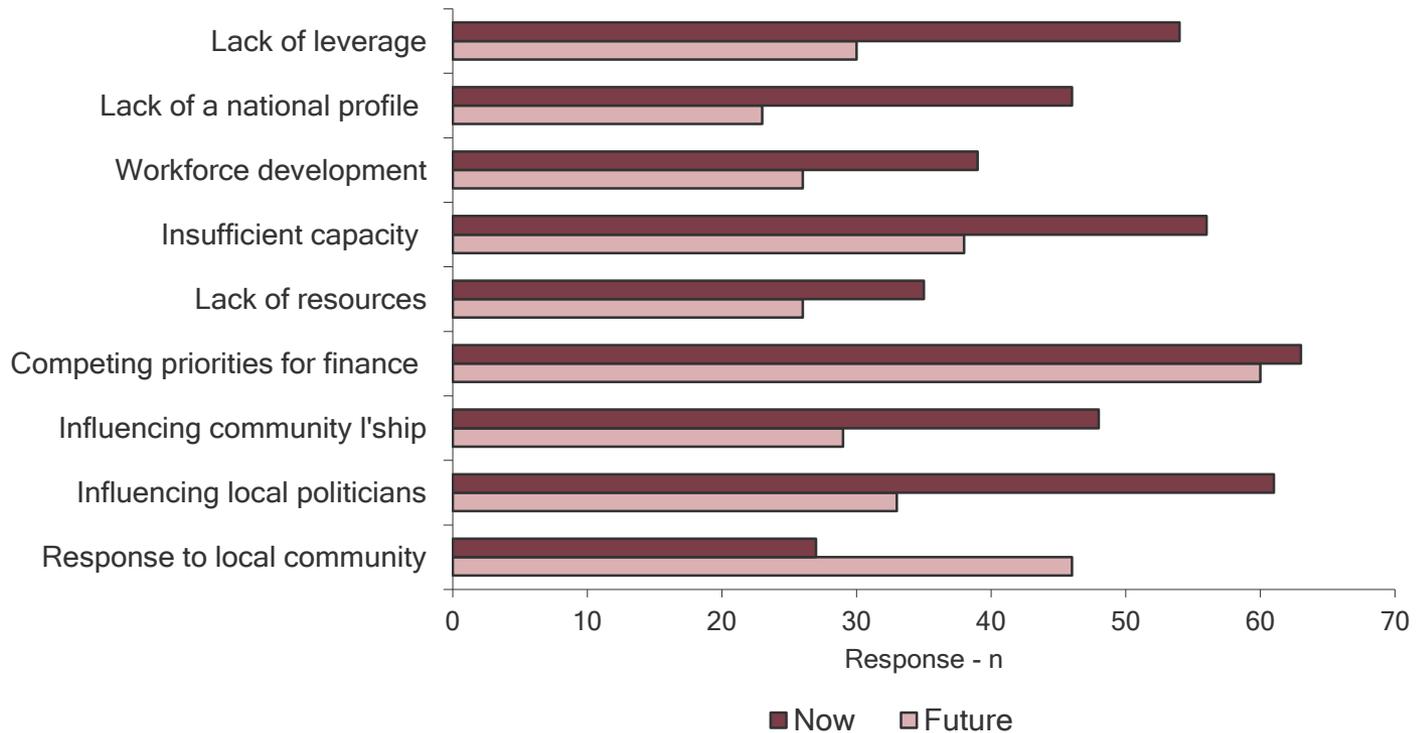
Prioritising local stakeholders

- DsPH reported Clinical Commissioning Groups as the top priority, followed by education and local people
- district council and local Healthwatch to a lesser degree
- others included children centres and higher education





Challenges and threats to delivery





Challenges and threats to delivery

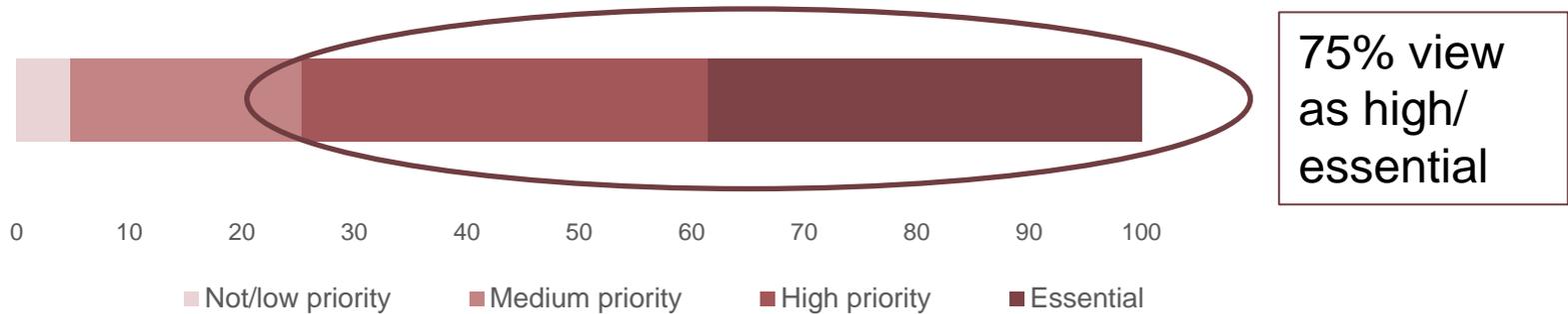
Competing priorities for finance are a threat, now and in the future:

- now
 - influencing local politicians
 - insufficient capacity to sustain and realise the step change
 - lack of tools
- future
 - competing priorities for finance
 - responding to the local community
- others
 - lack of evidence base; constraints of political will and planning cycle

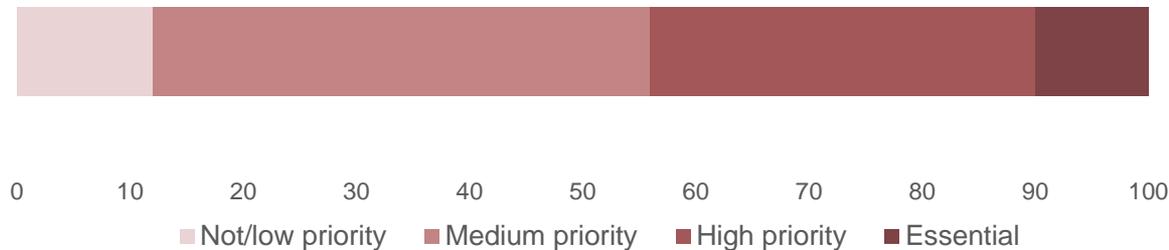


Views on Centre led activity (1)

Communicate effective practice to tackle obesity from a regional to national level and vice a versa (n=83)



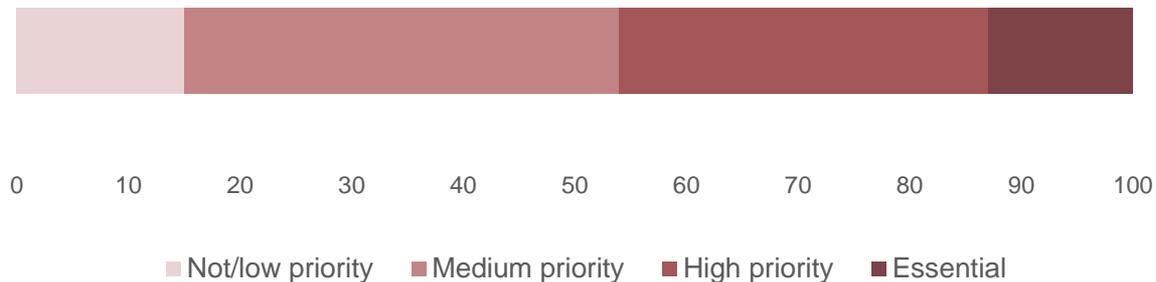
Support workforce development (n=82)



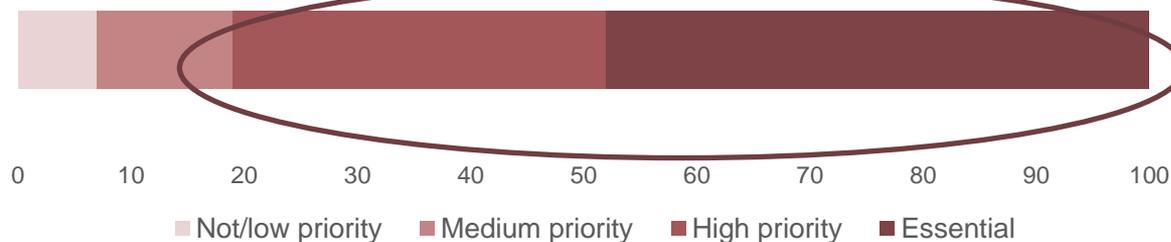


Views on Centre led activity (2)

Develop and facilitate learning networking events with LAs and other regional partners (n=85)



Advise and assist the promotion of a whole system approach to tackling obesity and promoting healthy weight (n=84)

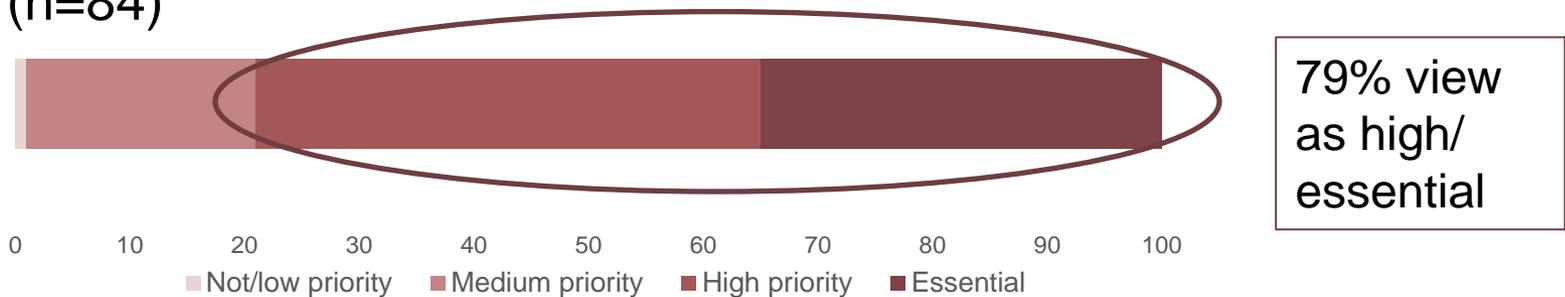


48% view as essential

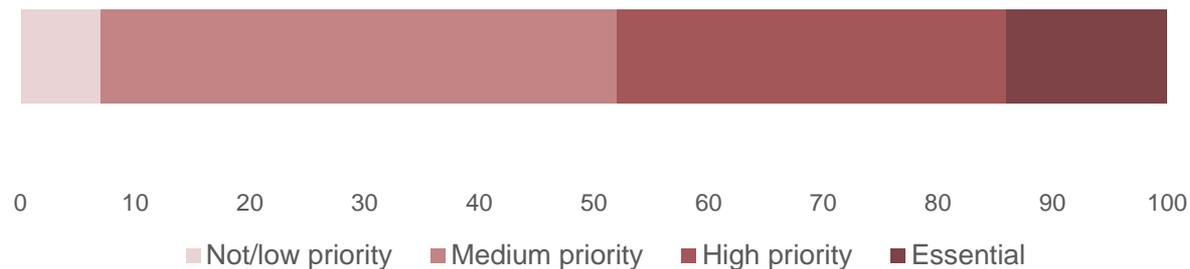


Views on Centre led activity (3)

Advise on evaluation of interventions including cost effectiveness toolkit (n=84)



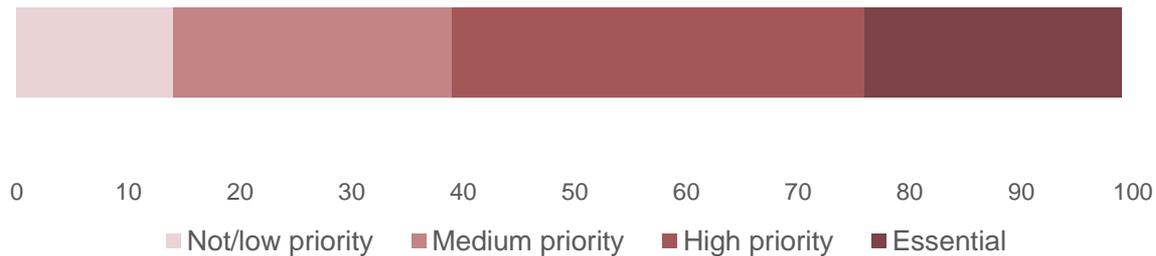
Advise on available guidance and use of social marketing opportunities (n=83)





Views on Centre led activity (4)

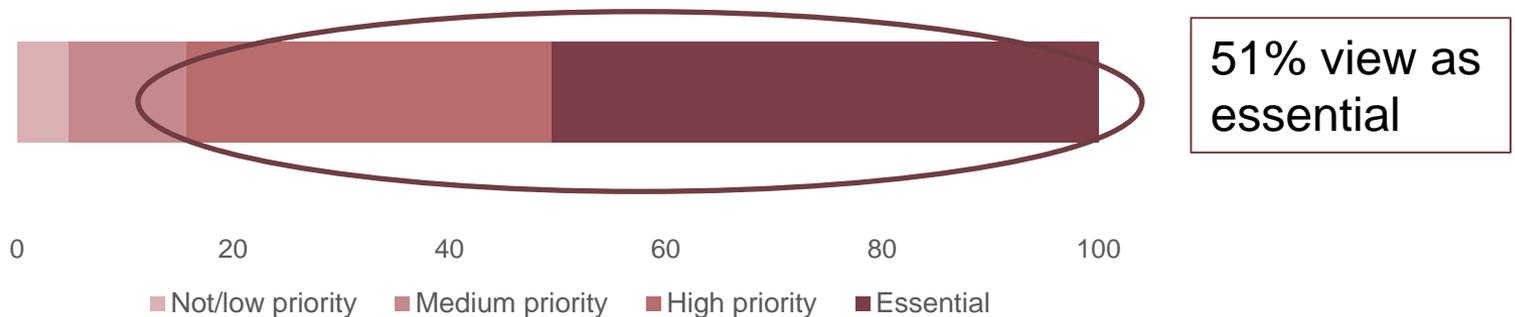
Support with guidance on commissioning & implementing healthy weight strategy including weight management services (n=83)



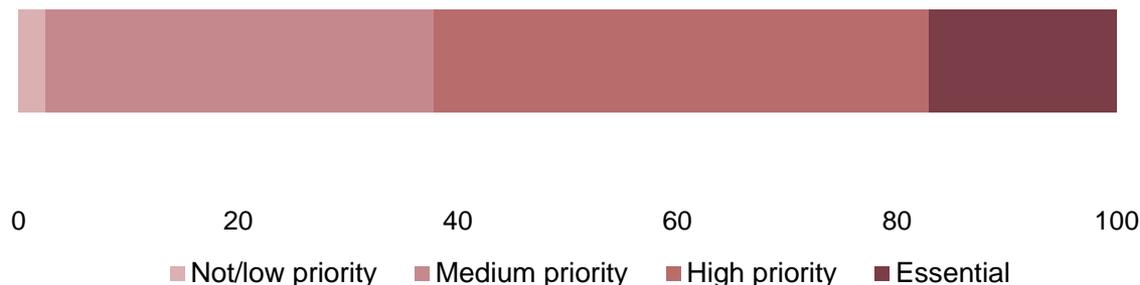


Views on national-led activity (1)

Lead national debate on obesity and develop a system wide obesity and healthy weight programme (n=83)



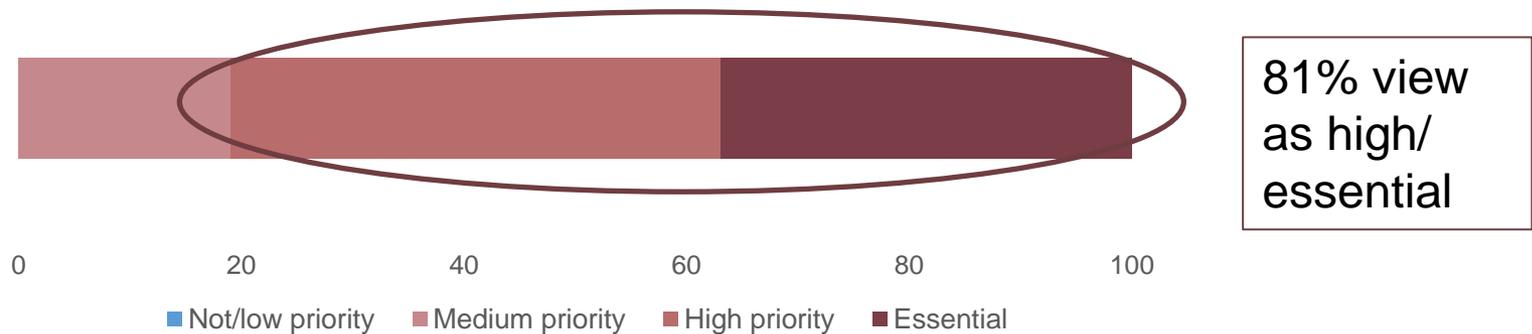
Work with LGA and DsPH to enhance and make most of the programmes that already exist – Change4Life, NCMP (n=82)



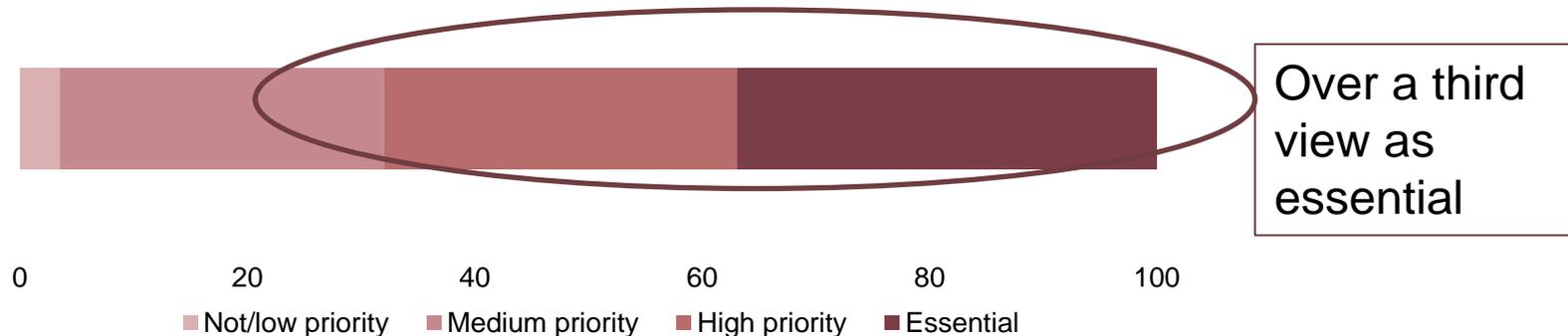


Views on national-led activity (2)

Provide expert opinion and evidence based reviews to support work on tackling obesity and promoting a system wide approach (n=84)



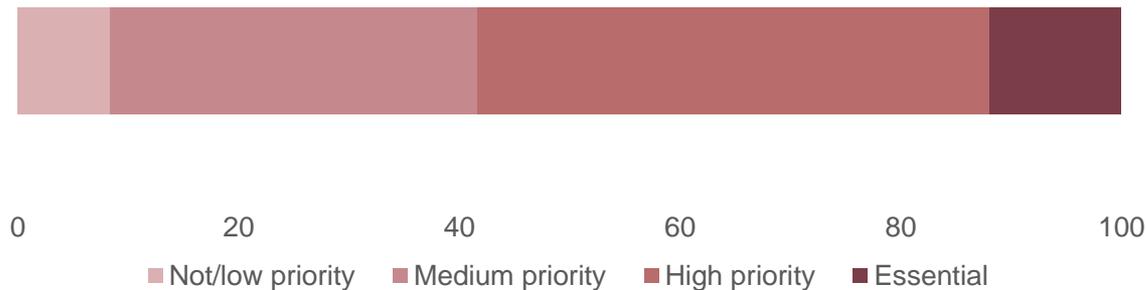
Provide the national repository of statistics and information on obesity rates including across population sub-groups (n=84)



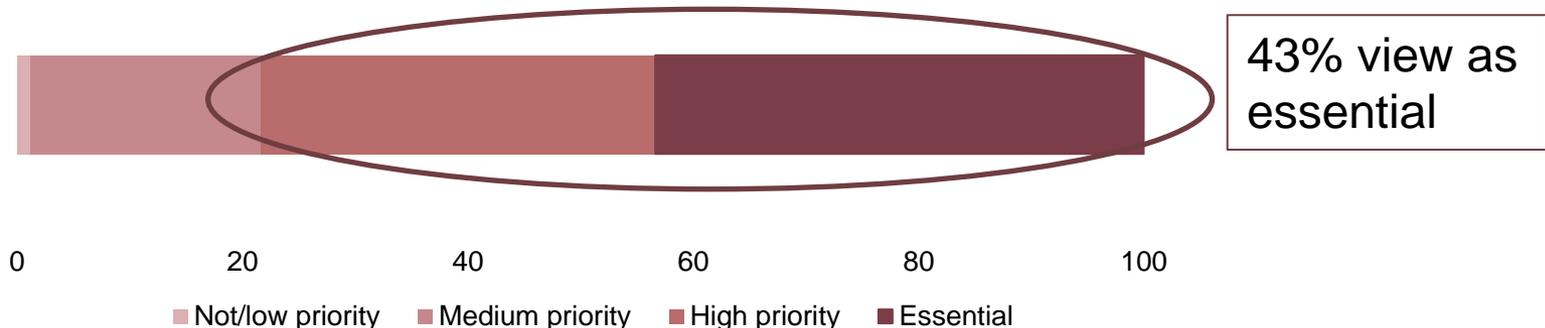


Views on national-led activity (3)

Provide advice on weight management services including guidance on commissioning/pathways and development of a national register of weight management interventions (n=84)



Join up government agendas and prioritise link up with the LGA (n=83)

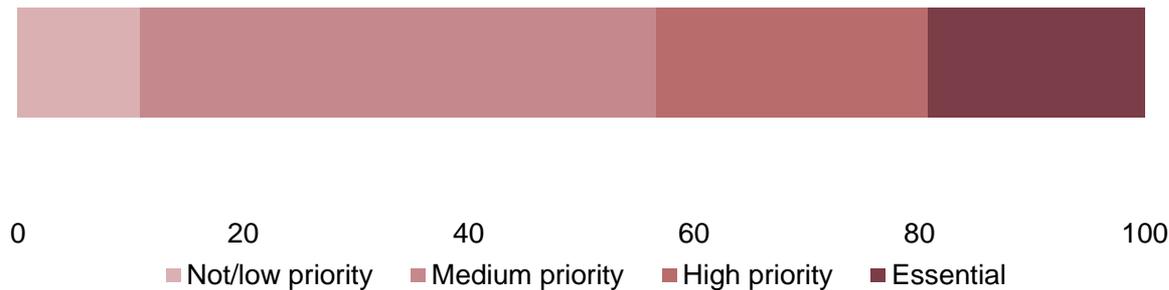


43% view as essential

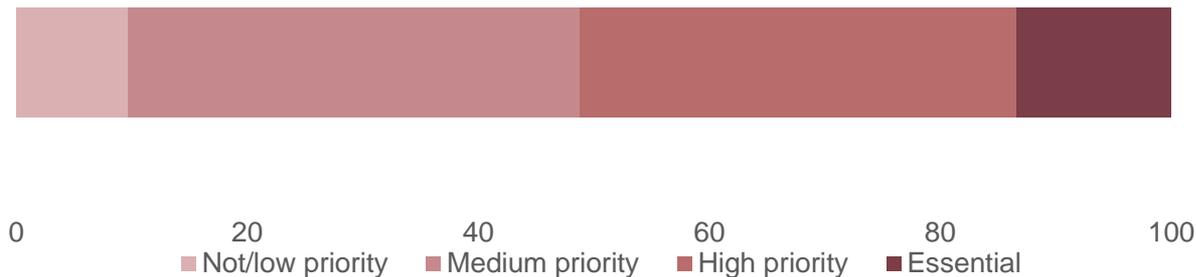


Views on national-led activity (4)

Create an obesity network, building on existing networks, to engage/sharing & learning on tackling the obesogenic environment (n=83)



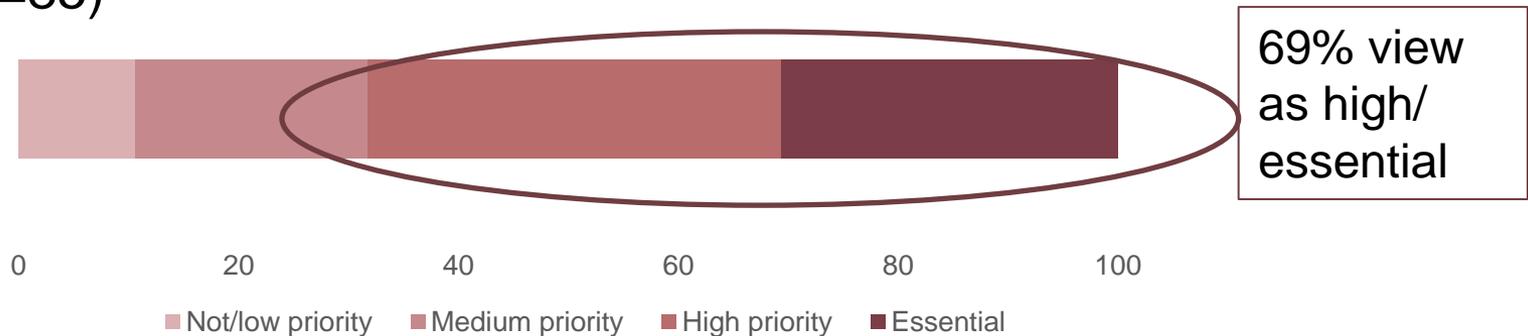
Develop, with the LGA, a framework for local public participation to inform approaches to tackling obesity (n=82)



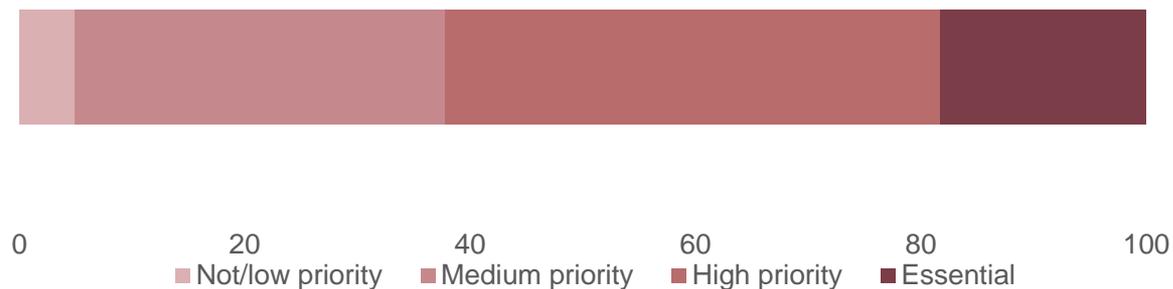


Views on national-led activity (5)

Deliver national campaigns (with local toolkits), including social media to change behaviour around healthier lifestyles to help tackle obesity (n=85)



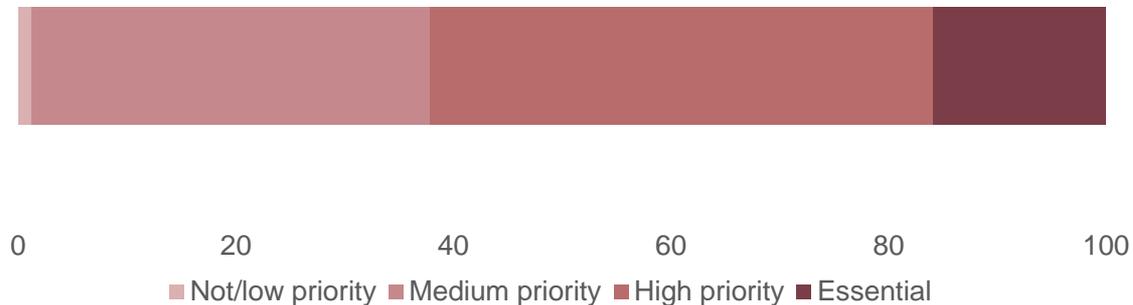
Provide advice on outputs of research approaches/initiatives to tackle obesity and promote 'pro' healthy weight behaviour (n=82)





Views on national-led activity (6)

Develop a framework of national initiatives to enhance/enable scale up of approaches to tackle obesity and maintain a healthy weight (n=82)





Summary on activity

Priorities at centre Level (% viewed this as essential)

- advise on promotion of a whole system approach to tackling obesity and promoting healthy weight **(48%)**
- advice on evaluation of interventions including cost effectiveness toolkits **(35%)**
- act as the hub for communications between local and national level including sharing of effective practices to tackle obesity **(39%)**

Priorities at national Level (% viewed this as essential)

- lead national debate on obesity and develop system wide obesity and healthy weight programme **(51%)**
- join up government agendas and prioritise LGA links **(43%)**
- expert opinion and evidence based reviews to support system wide approaches **(37%)**



PHE action

What will we do with this information (and when)?

- disseminate findings with DsPH through the ADPH and invite any further feedback for our consideration. Disseminate findings to other key partners including at the LGA Public Health conference in February (early 2014)
- dissemination with centre directors and PHE delivery teams to enable discussion on supporting local action (early 2014)
- consider the key themes and actions from the survey in conjunction with intelligence from a series of local engagement events held, during October to December, across England (before end of February 2014)
- use the findings to inform discussions taking place in PHE to plan and shape our obesity work plan (before end of February 2014)
- use the findings as a baseline and revisit to ensure our plans/approaches build upon DsPH views (ongoing into 2014)



Added value to PHE policy action:

- Jamie Blackshaw, Team leader: Obesity and Healthy Weight led on this survey and is using the survey as the basis for his DH-sponsored MSc Health Policy research at Imperial College
- the research has two phases (i) survey of local stakeholder views on priorities to tackling obesity and (ii) exploring how it informs the PHE obesity work plan
- the research is intended as an opportunity to explore ways to harness local insights/views and provide an added dimension to the development of PHE's obesity work plan



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PHE acknowledges the Association for Directors of Public Health and the Local Government Association for their support in developing and publishing the survey and to all Directors of Public Health for their participation in this survey.

If you have further views or wish to find out more on our latest plans on obesity please contact

jamie.blackshaw@phe.gov.uk

Team leader: Obesity and Healthy Weight